

B R O W N ' S

J.

T H R E E Y E A R S

IN THE

KENTUCKY PRISONS,

FROM

MAY 30, 1854, TO MAY 18, 1857.

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BY THOMAS BROWN,

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of Indiana.

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## P R E F A C E.

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Any one who has spent a considerable portion of time under peculiar, or at least undescribed circumstances, must have been very unobservant if he has nothing to relate in which the public would be interested. It may be, indeed, that such a person lies under the same obligation to the public, of describing his own condition, as a traveler is under to render his report respecting the unexplored countries he has traversed in his pilgrimage.

KITTO.

# BROWN'S THREE YEARS

IN THE

## KENTUCKY PRISONS.

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Christian men and women of my Country, you whose longing visions are turned to

"Greenland's icy mountains,  
To India's coral strands;  
Where Africa's sunny fountains,  
Pour down their golden sands;"

for heathen to whom you may send the Gospel; you whose eager eyes, and listening ears are bent to the far off Islands of the Pacific, to hear of your Missionary's success, behold the Heathen at your own doors. See a man, a member of a Christian Church, charged with no *crime*, not proven to have violated any of the laws of the professedly Christian State of Kentucky, incarcerated for three years in her prisons.

In the Spring of 1850, Thomas Brown, and his family, which consisted of himself, his wife and two daughters, of the ages of seven and four years, removed from Cincinnati, to Henderson, Kentucky.

Mrs. Brown kept a Millinery establishment and Variety Store; besides this, she made many articles of apparel for both sexes.— Mr. Brown had from the first followed the business of peddling their goods, and the manufactures of his wife, on both sides of the Ohio River, for some distance above and below Henderson, in Kentucky, and Evansville, in Indiana.

As a great deal has been said about Mr. Brown's traveling equipage, and its adaptation to running off slaves, we will here state that it was a small spring wagon, drawn by two horses. It had black oil-cloth curtains that could be fastened down tightly, as was necessary, to protect the goods from the weather, and that was all.

By the persevering industry of himself and wife, they made a tolerably comfortable living. Though lacking the luxuries of their slaveholding neighbors, they were also free from their cares, their anxieties, and their responsibilities, as well as the exhibitions of passion, caused by their adherence to the so called "Divine Institution" of Slavery.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown, with their eldest daughter, were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. Mr. Hays, Pastor. They were respected by their neighbors and customers, but still had opportunities of learning the contempt felt by slaveholders, for those who obtain their bread by the sweat of their brows, they at one time having received propositions to do that which was truly servile. Those propositions were rejected with the scorn of virtuous indignation, and to these repulses they date a system of espionage that ended in the arrest of Mr. Brown, on suspicion of aiding the slaves, who, to a great number had recently escaped from the counties of Henderson, Union, Davies and Hopkins.

The love of freedom was inherent in Mr. Brown; and had it not been, the cruelties of slaveholding would have cultivated it; for it is a system alike cruel to the master and his victim. The advocacy of slavery fetters the mind of the master; he dare not turn his eyes in any direction than that one marked out by those Ministers of the Gospel, who tell him, as they encourage him to grasp more firmly the blood-stained lash, and manacle, that Slavery is as much a Divine Institution as that of husband and wife; of parent and child.

The Great Jehovah said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Can that institution be divine whose darkest features is the avowed violation of the seventh Commandment?

The Great Jehovah commanded parents to instruct their children in his law. Can that Institution be Divine, whose exemplifiers rear their children for market? who make merchandise of their own flesh and blood?

The Law of God says men shall not steal. Can that institution be divine, that permits a man to rob his brother of the priceless liberty, not only of body but of soul?

The slaveholders of Henderson and the adjoining counties, supposed that their "chattels," made of one blood with themselves, and objects of the same Redeeming Love, could not escape without assistance, and they were on the alert to find who aided them.—From Mr. Brown's known love of freedom, he was supposed to have a friendly feeling for those who were even "guilty of a skin not colored like his own."

The last peddling trip but one he made, was to Union county, to deliver some articles that had been ordered, and, as usual, to sell as many other goods as he could. On his return from his last ex-

cursion which had been in the neighborhood of Evansville, Indiana, he was watering his horses at a pond about six miles from Henderson, on the 28th day of May, 1854. He was here accosted by Ward and Gavitt, of Evansville, who ordered him to surrender himself to their custody, on charge of assisting a woman and her children to escape from Union County, as they had disappeared about the time of Mr. Brown's last peddling excursion in that neighborhood.

He asked for their writ, but they not being able to show one, he refused to submit, and compelled the men to let go of his horses, one of each having been seized by his self-constituted captors.—They followed him to Henderson, where they arrived after dark. Gavitt then obtained a warrant, and Mr. B. soon surrendered himself to Danforth, an officer of that place. He was taken before Squire Allison, who ordered him to jail, to be carried to Morganfield, as he was suspected of having committed the offence in Union county.

He remained in the jail at Henderson, two nights and one day before being taken to Morganfield and it was not till the third day after his arrest, in the afternoon, that there was any examination. The bail demanded was five thousand dollars, which was an excessive sum for the alleged offence; therefore, in direct violation of the laws of Kentucky, which say excessive bail shall not be required. In default of this bail he was committed to the County Prison, at Morganfield, to await his trial at the next term of the Circuit Court of Union County.

A large crowd of highly excited people assembled at the preliminary trial, and personal violence to the prisoner was threatened and feared. Even women! 'gentle women!' eagerly desired summary vengeance to be administered to an old man, whose crime was in the suspicion that he had assisted a sister women who was in great distress.

Three witnesses appeared against Mr. Brown. Ward, of Evansville, who only testified to his arrest, and two others. One of those was called a Mexican, but he was supposed to be an Indian; the other was an Irish boy; both of whom had been tried at Evansville, a few days previously, charged with aiding slaves in their escape, but were discharged for want of sufficient evidence. There was less justice in the courts of far-famed Kentucky. Lack of evidence, and the illegibility of the pretended witnesses, did not prevent Mr. Brown's committal to jail, in default of the excessive bail demanded.

By the laws of Kentucky an Indian cannot testify against a white man, and one witness was by law inadmissible on that account. The other, the Irish boy, did not understand the nature and obligation of an oath, and was therefore manifestly unfit to testify.

Mr. Harris, Brown's able counsel, used every effort consistent with the personal safety of his client to induce the Court not to accept the testimony on account of its incompetency, but in vain. The people had determined to wreak their spite and vengeance

upon Thomas Brown, and refused, through their magistrate, to listen to either reason, law or gospel.

The Indian and Irish boy testified in presence of each other, not separately, as Mr. Harris demanded; which reasonable demand was refused.

The Indian stated that on the previous Tuesday he and the Irish boy were on the Kentucky side of the river; that they met Mr. Brown, above Henderson with his wagon and he asked them if they had seen Henry, a colored man who lived at Evansville.—They told him they had; when he appeared by his expressions to be disappointed at not meeting him himself. That in the afternoon of the same day they met Mr. Brown, below Henderson, with his wagon, going in the direction of Union County. He asked if they had found their horses yet, that being their ostensible business on that side of the river. They told him no. He then asked them if they had been to the house of a free woman of color in Union County. Upon answering in the affirmative he asked if they saw Henry there. When they told him no, he appeared displeased, and complained of Henry's tardiness in not attending to the *business*.

The Irish boy said he was not with the Indian, on Tuesday; it was a colored boy named Gilbert who was with him; to this the Indian assented. The Irish boy said that he was with the Indian, on Thursday, and met Mr. Brown going in the direction of Uniontown. That he asked them if they had been to this colored woman's house. They told him Henry was there. Mr. Brown said he was glad to hear it; if Henry had been faster the business would have been fixed long ago; he had had *them* at the river *twice before*. Who, or what, *them* were, deponents said not. The Indian and Irish boy agreed in this, and no cross examination could induce either to vary. They appeared to have learned the story well, and maintained it. Mr. Brown was committed to jail on their testimony. His preliminary trial took place June 3d, 1854. The following letter, bearing date three days after, and subsequently published in the Evansville papers, shows to what extremity the people of Union County were reduced, when a member of the United States Senate would offer a bribe to get a fellow creature sent to the Penitentiary. The money was not offered for the *arrest* of Mr. Brown, he was already in prison; but for his *conviction*. It is presumed that Mr. Dixon was in his seat in the Senate, and voted for the resolutions making a *national acknowledgment* to Captain Ingraham, for protecting some foreigner who had taken refuge under the flag of our Country; but the stars and stripes are no shield in the "land of the free and home of the brave," when might is arrayed against right:

HENDERSON, Ky., June 6th, 1854.

Mr. Gavitt—Dear Sir: The citizens here have raised for you, and those who assisted you, one hundred dollars, for the apprehension and lodging in the Union County jail of Brown, charged with stealing negroes. The citizens, here and in Morganfield, authorized Mr. Harris (not the lawyer) to say to you, that for the

apprehension and sending to the penitentiary of Brown, who is thus charged, they would see that five hundred dollars, would be paid you. Should you produce against Brown such testimony as will convict him of stealing slaves from this side of the river, you may rely upon getting this sum from the citizens—say five hundred dollars, less the one hundred now enclosed to you. Please acknowledge the \$100 enclosed.

Yours respectfully,

ARCH. DIXON,  
A. J. ANDERSON.

It has not been ascertained certainly how the letter came into the printer's hands. It has been conjectured that Messrs. Gavitt and Ward expected the five hundred dollars for the *arrest* of Mr. Brown, but the 'honorable' Mr. Dixon and his coadjutors kept back the four hundred till they should find evidence to *convict* him.— Possibly Gavitt got angry, or felt remorseful. Be that as it may, the letter and the bribe came before the public.

About the time Mr. Brown was committed to the prison of Morganfield, a meeting was held at Henderson, not to express pity and sympathy for Mrs. Brown and her children, as became the gallant Kentuckians, but to order the afflicted family to leave the place.— Among those who made themselves busy in their efforts against a woman, were two sprigs of the chivalrous stock, who had insulted Mrs. Brown. One, by desiring her assistance in procuring the ruin of a most estimable young lady, whose only fault in his eyes was, that she was *white*, and therefore not a 'chattel,' and her misfortune, in a slave state, that she obtained her livelihood by honest labor.

The self-styled gentlemen had not forgotten the scorn (to which reference has been made) with which Mrs. Brown rejected their vulture-like proposals.

A committee appointed at the meeting, waited upon Mrs. Brown, and informed her that she must leave the place within a certain time. If she remained after that time they would compel her to go.

Was there no Captain Ingraham, in Henderson, to earn a nation's thank-offering ; a nation's praise, by protecting a defenceless women and her helpless children ? There was no such person, and she had to leave.

There are many women in our country who do not have to assist in providing a livelihood for their families, and, therefore can have no idea of what she suffered at the destitution that stared her and her little ones in the face, at being compelled by the Chivalry of Kentucky, to break up a flourishing business, which she had obtained by great industry and perseverance, and go, she knew not whither ; but there is no woman, either savage or civilized, that can hesitate to sympathize with them at being obliged to leave a loved husband, and an honored father in a reeking prison, one only friend being left, Mr. Harris, his counsel.

Mrs. Brown and her family went from Henderson to Princeton, Gibson County, Indiana. The expenses of her husband's trial de-

manding a great amount of means, she found Princeton not a suitable place to enlarge her business in, and she finally returned to her old home in Indianapolis, in the Fall of 1854. After great trials and privations, many struggles with sorrow and despondency, she has, in the last place, become a successful manufacturer of Millinery, and dealer in fancy goods. She has not yet forgotten that she ate the bread of adversity and drank the waters of affliction, during her husband's 'Three years in the Kentucky Prisons.'

It has been said that the prison at Morganfield is a disgrace to Union County, if the county be susceptible of disgrace. Mrs. Brown visited the prison several times during her residence at Princeton, and a description of it on her first visit, will, with a little variation, be a description for the year, lacking a few days, that her husband was a tenant there.

The entrance was through a trap door and by a steep ladder.—The room, if it should be dignified by such a name, was sixteen by eighteen feet. In one corner was Mr. Brown, and a few filthy rags for a sleeping place; in another, a little straw near which were chained two colored men; and in a third corner—Oh! decency forgive me; humanity I know will pardon me for telling, that in a third corner the human excrement was piled up, so high the maggots were crawling over the floor. And this den, this more than Calcutta Hole, was lighted and aired by two small grated windows. By the devotion, the perseverance and energy of Mrs. Brown, this beastly den was altered a *little*; a very little, for the better. She was permitted to send her husband a bed and some bedding, and to furnish him with some necessaries; which woman-like, wife-like, she did out of her almost exhausted means.

The Statutes of Kentucky require the Judge of the Court to visit the county prison once in two weeks, and yet during the time of Mr. Brown's imprisonment he came to the grate *once*. He was sweltered with heat in the summer, almost smothered with the effluvia of the 'Black Hole' of Morganfield; fed upon garbage, soups and remnants; the food, wretched as it was, given at irregular and distant intervals; suffering for water. In the winter no fire was furnished till late in January, and not then till the Judge had been applied to three times, and the last application accompanied with a strong intimation that the next appeal would be to the Governor.

What Mr. Brown suffered during the many days and nights of his captivity, from summer's heat and winter's cold—from hunger and thirst—from filth and vermin—by separation from home and its joys, we who have not been debarred air and water, food and rest, home and friends, cannot possibly imagine. Those only who have suffered as he has, can realize the gracious deliverance expressed in Holy Writ to "undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free."

One of the colored men imprisoned with Mr. Brown, was charged with arson. The penalty of the slave who is guilty of this crime is death. The poor fellow was taken to Tennessee, where the crime was committed, and paid the forfeiture with his life.

The other was a man of great mind, though enclosed in such a tegument, that the laws of a Christian country deemed him an article of merchandise. He was arrested for a runaway ; he did not deny the charge, but resolutely refused to give any clue to his owner.

During the weary hours of their captivity, he told Mr. Brown that he came from Alabama—that he had been shot at four times. One time so severely injured, that he lay in the bushes by the roadside four days unable to go on. At another time during his long journey in quest of liberty, he was an entire week without food, except such as he got in the woods. How that poor fellow hid by day from his cruel master man, and his less cruel blood-hounds, how he traveled by night—how he endured ‘hopes and fears that kindle hopes,’ are the histories of many of his race. But alas ! when he arrived almost at the Ohio River, which, if not the door to the Ark of safety, is at least the bow of hope to the weary seekers after the ‘Rights of Man,’ he was *arrested*, and lodged in *jail*. No owner answering the advertisement, he was, according to *law*, sold to pay expenses. On the block he declared that no man in America should hold him. He proved a very efficient workman, but the love of freedom he inherited from his Anglo-American father, (Tom was almost white) made him writhe under his chains. He was shortly resold, and taken to the neighborhood of Memphis. In about a month he was a second time arrested, near Morganfield, and placed in its prison. Some of his friends and kindred, kindred at least by the same suffering, had planned an excursion to the ‘North Star’ previously to his being taken to Tennessee, and Tom had engaged to go with them. He came into Union County for that purpose, but a false friend betrayed him. He concealed himself, but the unerring blood-hound tracked him. He told Mr. Brown after he was put in jail, if he had known a blood-hound was after him he would have baffled him, *for he had been used to them.*

Missionaries of our most Christian country ! tell not the Heathen to whom you take the Gospel of light and life, that we hunt our brethren and sisters with blood-hounds ; if you should, they might think *we* not *they* needed that Gospel and your labors.

We should like to ask some of these Southern Scripture expounders, if the blood-hound, the rifle, the jail and the coffle, are Divine Institutions.

The next time Tom was sold he was taken to Georgia. We hope the chains upon his festering flesh do not bind the Union together ; but if they do, as much as we should dislike to see it fall to pieces on the occasion, we cannot help desiring that his *Free spirit* will surmount every obstacle till he arrives so near the ‘North Star’ that his shackles will fall, and ‘no man in America’ dare hold him.

Many stratagems, as well as threats were used to induce Mr. Brown to make some expressions that could be used on the trial.—One Mr. Williams, whom he had never seen was arrested on the same charge. They told him that Williams had turned State’s

evidence and implicated him ; but that would not do. They then tried to get him to become State's evidence, but in vain. Brown told them plainly he knew nothing about Williams, nor Williams about him.

All the time Mr. Brown was in prison no minister of the Gospel nor Christian friend once came near him. He had been taken from the 'den' twice during the year, but the prosecution was not yet ready. We suppose the aspirants for Senator Dixon's bribe had not been sufficiently drilled, but they came at last. He was brought to his final trial in April, 1855.

Along with Ward, the Indian and Irish boy (whose depositions were not altered from the preceding year) appeared a man named Steele, a resident of Gibson County, Indiana. He was said to be an inferior yellow looking, woolley-headed, ignorant fellow. What his character is in his own vicinity, may be judged by the following certificate from his immediate neighbors :

CERTIFICATE.

We, the undersigned, citizens of the County of Gibson, in the State of Indiana, being well acquainted with James Steele, a resident of this County, testify we believe him to be inordinately avaricious. So much so, that the prospect of gain would materially influence his testimony in a court of Justice.

JOHN ERWIN,	SAMUEL HALL,
ROBERT WILSON,	HENRY DUNCAN,
ROB'T DUNCAN,	A. J. WRIGHT,
E. A. WILLIAMS,	S. S. SIMPSON,
W. G. FOSTER,	JOHN SCOTT,
SAMUEL STERNE,	WM. STORMONT,
JOHN McMaster,	SIMON ORR,
WM. ORR,	JOHN STERNE,
JAS. STORMONT, JR.,	CALVIN MINNIS,

ROBERT ARCHER,

Steele testified that either on Saturday or Sunday, Mr. Brown called at his house and asked to stay all night. He stated he had a woman and child in the wagon who had the small pox, and therefore he must leave it in the woods. Mr. Brown slept in Steele's bed that night, and in the morning asked for some coffee and other refreshments for the woman and child. He furnished the articles and went with Mr. Brown towards the wagon, but saw no vestige of a human being.

If the woman, said to have been in Mr. Brown's wagon, was from beyond Mason and Dixon's line, the deponent could not be witness whether she was a Saxon or Ethiopian daughter of a gallant Kentuckian. To give aid and comfort to the suffering Saxon daughter is a Christian duty ; to bestow a like kindness on the suffering Ethiopian daughter, is a crime of the blackest dye.

Messrs. Harris and Crockett (the latter a relation of the late Col. David Crockett) made a noble and manly defence for their client, the prisoner. They exerted themselves to the utmost to show the illegality and worthlessness of the testimony, but in vain.

A part of the jury possessed innate feelings of justice. These feelings, enlightened by the arguments of Messrs. Harris and Crockett, caused the body to deliberate twenty-four hours before a verdict was rendered. The Grand Jury had previously hesitated in presenting an indictment, for want of sufficient evidence, and their hesitation may account for the long delay in the trial.

The jury brought in a verdict of "guilty," and as a kind of compromise between the fire-eaters and advocates of justice, they recommended two years in the Penitentiary, the shortest term the law prescribes for the alleged offence, which sentence he received.

The whole trial and conviction was on suspicion. Suspicion is not evidence, and the laws of all civilized countries demand evidence of guilt, before punishment.

After Mrs. Brown's removal to Indianapolis, she was compelled by pecuniary want to give up visiting her captive husband. His present needs and his approaching trial, the expenses of witnesses and counsel, requiring her, not only to hoard every cent, but to occupy every minute of time for the accumulation of more.

The expenses of Mr. Brown's trial, and the amount of money furnished him for food and other necessaries, during his three years in the Kentucky Prisons, amounted to a sum little short of five hundred dollars. The most of this she earned at her business, though she warmly acknowledges the kindness of some of her old friends, and also that of others, made friends by her husband's sufferings.

It is woman's lot to suffer, and it is expected that she shall suffer in silence. We could not if we would (and it may not be desirable) tell of Mrs. Brown's trials. One little circumstance, may not, however, be amiss, as showing the straits to which the family were reduced, by the cruel and unjust imprisonment of the husband and father.

The little girl, the youngest of the family, had a dog, to which, child-like, she was very fondly attached; but, kissing it with many tears, she handed it to a man, who paid her a dollar for it, which she sent to her father.

The conviction and sentence of Mr. Brown, surprised and grieved his family exceedingly. They knew there was no evidence against him, and could not believe even the slaveholding State of Kentucky would send a man to the penitentiary on bribed testimony, but it was true, they did so.

Judge Hall, an eminent jurist of Indiana, has said the letter of Dixon and Anderson would have prevented the conviction of any one in a court of *justice*, but *vengeance* not *justice* ruled in Union County.

After Mrs. Brown had long endured the sickness of hope deferred, she expected her husband to be discharged at the April term of the Union County Court, 1855, but, instead of seeing him, she learned his *fate*. Shortly after Mr. Brown's conviction, the Governor of Kentucky visited Indianapolis. Mrs. Brown called on him to ask him to pardon her husband; not from *crime*, but from the *Penitentiary*. She also urged Gov. Wright to intercede for

her, but her efforts were vain ; and she committed her cause, and that of her family, to "Him who careth for the sparrow."

Mr. Brown was detained at Morganfield three weeks after his conviction, making his imprisonment unnecessarily that much longer.

When he was removed from jail he was chained like a criminal, to be taken to Frankfort. He was placed within the gloomy portals of the State Prison, May 8th, 1855. He was immediately dressed in the scant and horrid prison garments, and was made the companion of the murderer, the forger, the swindler, the thief, the 'strange woman,' and many other criminals ! When the dinner bell called, what a scene ! Two hundred human beings, from the boy of thirteen, to the man of sixty, all in the prison garb, took their places in parties of eight, at their board upon which was placed *cold* bread and bacon, a *share* in each plate which was of iron. The bread was made of the coarsest corn meal, and was frequently very musty, and unfit for human beings to eat. It was made with water only, and baked very hard. The bacon was too odious in smell and taste to be given to a brute. This, with water, constituted the prisoners' fare, day in and day out, all the time, with a short exception. Molasses was furnished for the evening meal. At night he was locked in a cell with a vile criminal where the only semblance of bedding was a sack made of an old blanket, and filled with dirty shavings. To attempt to tell those who never slept in a Penitentiary cell how he suffered from fleas, would be useless. Fortunately other vermin cannot live in the cold stone walls of a prison.

Mr. Brown was immediately set to carrying sacks of corn across the 'Walk' and up a pair of stairs to the mill. The sacks contained three and four bushels of grain, but he was too weak, from age and long confinement in the prison at Morganfield, to perform this labor. He was then put to picking 'Waste.' This is the refuse of the Tow after the best has been spun. It is picked, re-hackled, and then spun.

On the second day of Mr. Brown at the State Prison, his hair had been shaved off from his head, and a small cap without any rim given him. There was no kind of collar to his shirt or jacket, and he had been for almost a year previously, in the County Prison at Morganfield, out of the sun and without any exercise whatever ; he had therefore, become very weak and feeble. The operation of picking 'Waste' was performed in the 'Walk,' exposed to the direct rays of a summer's sun, and the reflection from the brick pavement. We cannot tell what he suffered ; we may only faintly imagine by the skin peeling from his face, neck and hands.

But the Sabbath, the day of rest, the delight of the Christian, came, and the heart of the soul sick captive leaped within him, when he heard the sound of the Church bell within the prison walls, calling the forgotten of humanity to the Chapel. He thought he should hear the glad tidings of the Gospel even in the valley of Baca.

All the convicts who were not *at work* assembled ; the under keepers were there with their hats on their heads, and their pistols *almost* in their hands ; the handcuffs and the most cruel cat in their rooms, awaiting the unguarded look, the unwary word. Then came the clergyman, he who had consecrated himself to preach deliverance to the captive, and *recovering of sight to the blind*.

The services in the Prison took place at two o'clock, the Minister attending a more select congregation in the morning. There was a wonderful contrast between the handsomely dressed, dandy looking preacher, with his exquisitely trimmed whiskers, who had just arisen from a luxurious table, and walked with a truly American hautuer up the aisle, and these fellow sinners, in their striped and scanty prison garb, who ate their dinner of bread made of old meal and stinking meat, and often not enough of that.

They sang a hymn from the Southern version of the Methodist Hymn Book, and those convicts that could sing were compelled, in fear of the 'cat,' to assist in this portion of the service. The officiating clergyman then said some words he called a prayer, during which the miserable, hungry outcasts were obliged to kneel *nolens volens*. The preacher gave them most logical discourses, such as would have suited Princeton or Brandon Springs, but were sadly out of place, as well as unappreciated there. A few words purporting to be a blessing, in the name of the Lord Jesus, were pronounced, and the convicts left the Chapel with the dread of the handcuffs and cat before their eyes. They then went to the 'Walk' and ran races, played marbles, pitched quoits, and gambled generally, with their small means. These things were done beneath the eyes and oaths, and frequently with the assistance of the under keepers.

The humane State of Kentucky, decreed, through her Legislature, that the keeper of her convicts should pay two dollars out of his salary to have preaching each Sabbath for those convicts. The State was satisfied that she had provided two dollar's worth of preaching for the wretched prisoners. The preacher was satisfied that he got two dollars, and the keeper cursed because he had it to pay. As to the convicts, we suppose they had rather been tossing coppers, than pretending to listen.

During the two years that Mr. Brown was in the State Prison, no preacher once crossed its threshold, but those who came for the *two dollars*.

Sometimes, people from the city, came to the services, dressed with all the elegance of wealth, and the fashions of Christianity.—They would walk in with their broadcloth and mustaches, their satins and jewelry, and look with scorn and contempt, upon their brethren and sisters of the dust, whom circumstances, mostly the influence of the grog shops, had placed in such contrast with themselves.

Yes, their *sisters* ! for women were there, who had been allured from the paths of virtue, and ran their short race from the house of infamy, and the grog shop, to the State Prison, there to be under the control, and completely in the power of the most profligate,

and the most ferocious of men ; at one time on terms of shocking familiarity, and at another subject to be flogged on the naked body with the cruel cat.

The Kentucky Prison is not the only public institution in our land, in which the women are entirely in the power of the officers. The tax-payers of many Christian Counties and States, would be surprised to know what sort of establishments their money sustain.

A Sabbath School was taught in the morning, by some of the prisoners, but no comment or explanation of the Scriptures allowed, lest the glad tidings of the Gospel should be elucidated. They had a Library there, but little interest was felt in it.

Christians,

From many an ancient river,  
From many a palmy plain,  
They call us to deliver,  
Their land from error's chain;

but the prisoners of our own land, they who have been consecrated to God in their infancy, by prayer and baptism, have no claim upon our sympathies. We leave them to the mercenary Moral Instructors, and the ferocious keepers.

When Mr. Brown had been in the prison a short time, he was ordered to carry some reels of hempen yarn from the Rope Walk, up stairs ; he was required to carry four in each hand at a time.— As we have said, he was feeble when he came into the Prison, and remained so, from hard labor, and the impossibility he found in eating enough of the disgusting food to satisfy nature. One morning, in attempting to ascend the stairs, he let a reel fall. Complaint was made that "Old Brown had worn himself out stealing negroes, and would not work ;" whereupon he was stripped, and flogged with the 'cat' till his blood ran upon the floor, as he passed to the breakfast, his flesh quivering with agony, his soul tempted by Satan, to fear the Lord had forsaken him, and his God had forgotton him. He told a fellow convict what he had suffered. The broken down slave driver who had flogged him, saw him speak, and after breakfast, with one blow of that fist, which had probably become calloused by slave driving, knocked him down, and broke out two of his teeth. He lay for a long time insensible. When life returned, with it came a fierce desire for revenge. He now thinks it was fortunate nothing was in his reach, with which he could take the life of the monster in human shape. However, he expressed his feelings in words, and the ruffian called for the handcuffs, and cat, saying he would have satisfaction now. Mr. Brown told him to touch him if he dare, in the absence of Ward, the head keeper, it being against the law, for a subordinate to whip without permission. Finding Mr. Brown knew the law, he gave up his idea of satisfaction at that time.

But the law, (except that of brute force,) and the Gospel, are mere words any where within the prison walls.

We are satisfied that the system of making money for individuals or state, out of the thews and sinews, the blood and tears, of convicts, is a scathing disgrace to the Christian name.

“Spirit of Mercy, in thy mercy wise,  
Against the brutal code in triumph rise.”

Mr. Brown was whipped, about four weeks after this, for not eating the crust of his bread. It was baked remarkably hard, and he had, as stated, had two teeth knocked out, and having only ten minutes for the meal, he left the crust.

During Mr. Brown's first summer in the Prison, Ward, the keeper, was building, and Mr. Brown was taken out to carry the hod for the brick-masons, which he was ordered to do, up the ladders, to the third story; but it was out of the question for him to do it, notwithstanding their curses, and threats.

During the first three months in the State Prison, Mr. Brown's sorrows were great; not only from his own sufferings, but from the cruelties he saw inflicted on his fellow prisoners, several having died, a short time after severe floggings, while he was there.

He thought during these first three months, that he was lost to God, and forgotten of humanity, but by giving himself continually to prayer, he became joyful in its exercise. The Sun of Righteousness arose, even within the walls of the Kentucky prison, and “the Lord became to him the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

At the expiration of three months Mr. Brown was treated much better, and finally, he became a messenger for the Prison, within, and without the walls. He also had the key to the female ward.—From the attempts made by the under officers of the Prison, to get this key, Mr. Brown soon saw that the name *penitentiary* was a misnomer as far as the women were concerned, the treatment they received in the Prison, having been referred to on another page.

His fare had been better for some time, Mrs. Brown, and her children (as already spoken of,) sending him money to get other food.

The term “Abolitionist,” in Kentucky, is considered more opprobrious than thief, or murderer. While Mr. B. was in Union County Prison, the horrors of which have been but faintly depicted, a man was arrested for murder. He was not put in the Prison at all, but kept in the jailor's house, and then bailed out for two thousand dollars. Mr. Brown's bail, it will be remembered, was put at five thousand dollars. The man was never brought to trial.

On his arrival at the State Prison, the head keeper was extremely glad to get another “Abolitionist,” as he called him, in his power, expressing with an oath, a wish to be permitted to hang all such.

At one time Mr. Brown was sent to a keeper's house, of an errand, and, it must be remembered, that on the streets of Frankfort, the same as within the walls, he wore the prison garb.

“I am sorry,” said Mrs. Ward, with womanly humanity, “to see so old a man as you, in the State Prison.”

“I am there unjustly, madam,” he replied.

“But did not a jury of your countrymen find you guilty?” she inquired.

"No madam," he replied, "they sold me. They valued my poor old head at five hundred pieces of silver, and my Divine Master, they sold for thirty pieces. They called him a blasphemer, and a wine bibber, and they have slandered me, also."

During his imprisonment, he was subjected to the jibes, not curses, not only from the officers, but the poor convicts themselves, because he was called an "Abolitionist."

Along with Mr. Brown, there were several other persons in the Prison, accused of aiding slaves to escape.

A Kentuckian, a mechanie, charged with giving a runaway something to eat.

A colored man, of Evansville, Indiana, accused likewise, of furnishing a meal, to a brother in distress. He died in the Prison, some time after receiving a severe blow, from one of the keepers.

Three others were there, Lovely, for thirteen years; Doyle, for twenty years, and Fairbanks, for twenty years.

The case of Mr. Fairbanks, commends itself to the tenderest sympathies of the Christian world. He is a citizen of Michigan, a Christian and a gentleman, and has served only five, of that long weary twenty. Like all others who are supposed to possess the feelings of a common humanity, he is subject to most cruel treatment. At one time, he received one hundred and seven lashes.—The prisoners are subject to thirty lashes, for coming short of their tasks. This he had received, when, trying to explain to his tormentor, that his loom was out of order, he poured down the rest upon his festering flesh. The sufferers are not allowed to speak back, that is, to explain anything.

Mr. Brown recognizes a sovereign Christian people, as King, and desires those Christians, to remember his fellow captive, as Pharaoh remembered Joseph.

Mr. Fairbanks is charged with no crime; he is accused of succoring, in their great distress, some of the Ethiopian sons and daughters, of Chivalrous Kentuckians.

In his capacity of Messenger, Mr. Brown had opportunities of knowing something of the early life of the criminals, and found that nearly all of them, came to this "Hell upon earth," through the drinking saloons, the grog shops, and gambling houses of our country.

In his visits to the hospital, he saw some of the effects of early religious training, although sunk for a time in the maddening bowl, and its consequences, one of which is, the horrors of the State Prison.

The death of several of the convicts, showed the power of a mother's love, and a mother's prayers; he having no doubt, that their spirits left the imprisoned clay, to join the praises of the ransomed. They died without rite or aid, from the professed preacher of the Gospel, for no one had two dollars to pay for their presence. They died, and were buried with as little attention as the brutes that perish, yet they were saved, by repentance toward God, and faith in Jesus Christ; having, in their last moments, sought the Fountain of Life, through the influence of early teaching.

On the 18th of May, 1857, Thomas Brown saw the gloomy turrets of the Kentucky Prisons receding, as the ears bore him away, towards the home of his wife and children, whom he found an unbroken band. The Angel of Death had not entered the circle, during his long separation from them, in the prisons of Kentucky. He suffered for no crime, and had no remorse to aggravate the cruelties inflicted upon him and his fellow convicts. The only charge brought against him, was that of being a neighbor to those who fell among thieves, and even that bribed testimony failed to substantiate.

We will not raise the veil, and say how the husband and father, was received by the wife and children, from whom he had been so long, and so cruelly separated, but we will say, he was cordially received by society, and into the bosom of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He addressed a public meeting of his fellow citizens, at Masonic Hall, June 6th, 1857, on the subject of his imprisonment.

It would, however, be impossible, for Mr. Brown, or any of his friends, to give any adequate idea, of the sufferings of himself and family, during his "Three years in the prisons of Kentucky."

While we would tenderly sympathize with Mrs. Brown and her daughters shall we not, from the faint glimpse we have had, shudderingly recoil, from looking further into the Prisons? Rather, let us pray for capacity to hate these crimes, Intemperance and Slavery, that build up and tenant the prisons of the United States.